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Tuesday, March 22, 2016 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

DROPPING THE F BOMB

Dame Helen talks drones, feminism and J-Law. 17

Glen Macnow weighs in on the Flyers, Sixers and Eagles. 22-23

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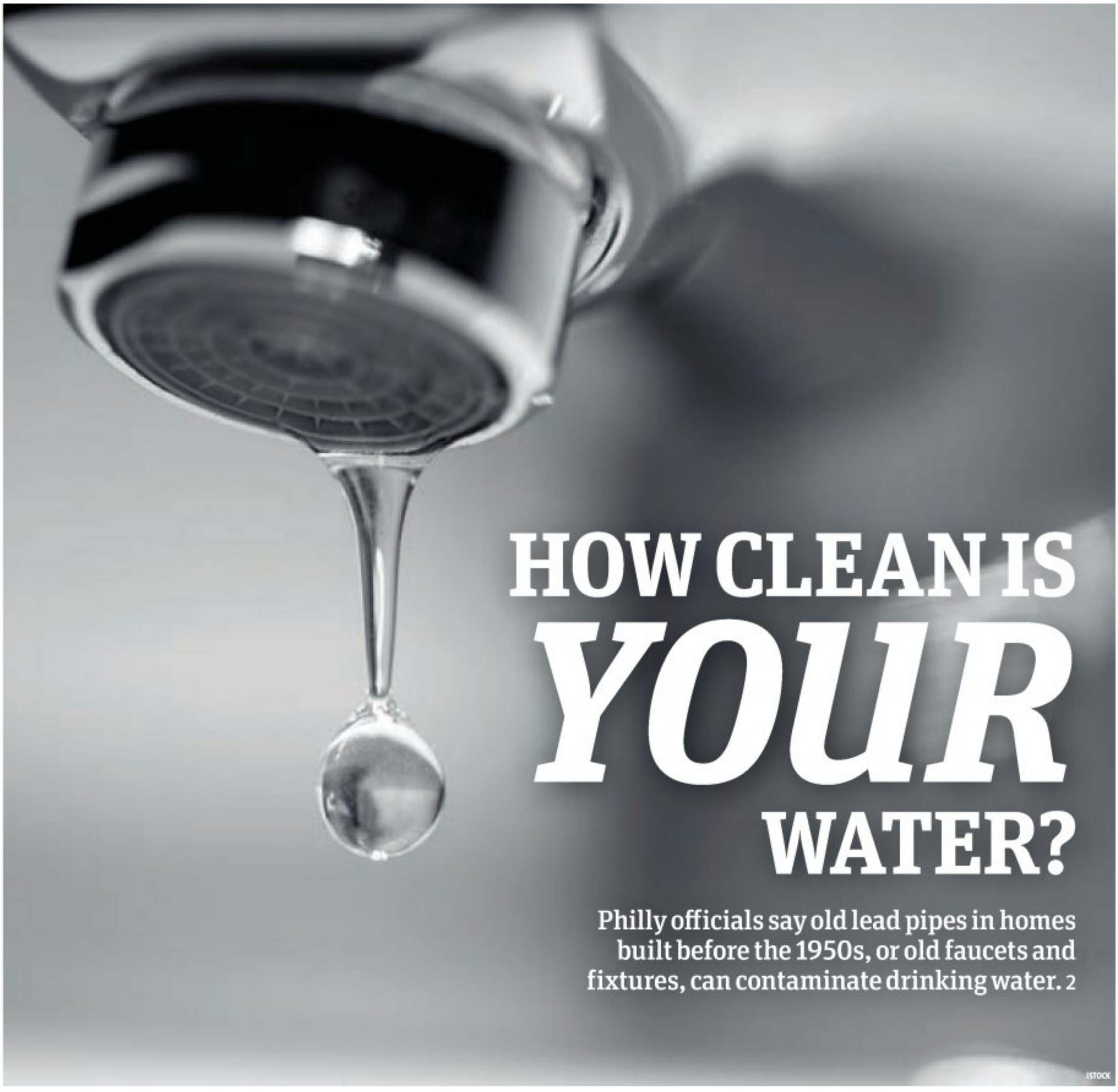

HOW CLEAN IS *YOUR* WATER?

Philly officials say old lead pipes in homes built before the 1950s, or old faucets and fixtures, can contaminate drinking water. 2

ISTOCK

OBAMA MEETS CASTRO IN THE HEART OF REVOLUTIONARY HAVANA

President Barack Obama was received by Cuban President Raul Castro in Havana on Monday at the start of historic talks where the U.S. leader will press his counterpart for economic and democratic reforms while hearing complaints about U.S. sanctions. Obama arrived in Cuba on Sunday on a trip that comes 15 months after he and Castro agreed to end five decades of Cold War-era animosity and work to normalize relations. On the first full day of his visit, he went to the heart of Cuba's Communist system, laying a wreath in Revolution Square at the memorial to independence hero Jose Marti.

REUTERS

SMALLER IPHONE EXPECTED AS APPLE FACES DROP IN SALES

Apple is expected to launch a smaller, cheaper iPhone on Monday aimed at emerging markets and possibly China, the world's biggest buyer of smartphones, as it looks to reverse a decline in worldwide sales of its most important product. The launch of such a phone — expected to be called the iPhone SE — would represent Apple's second bid for the crowded mid-tier market after an unsuccessful foray three years ago. It might give the world's best-known technology company a boost in the fast-growing Indian, Middle East and African markets but also risks cutting its average phone prices and profit margins.

REUTERS

FLORIDA JURY TO WEIGH PUNITIVE DAMAGES IN HOGAN SEX TAPE CASE

Former professional wrestler Hulk Hogan returned to a Florida courtroom on Monday to argue that the Gawker website should have to pay significant punitive damages on top of the $115 million it must pay for posting a sex tape online. Hogan, whose given name is Terry Bollea, is arguing the $60 million for emotional distress and $55 million for economic damages that a jury awarded him last week has not sent a strong enough message to the media company. Gawker plans to appeal the decision in a civil case that has drawn wide interest for testing boundaries between a celebrity's privacy rights and press liberties in the digital age. REUTERS

Philadelphia Water Department workers attempt to repair a pipe. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Flint makes residents question water quality

Officials testified Monday before City Council that the city has clean water — but residents' aging homes are sometimes the source of lead.

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Philadelphia Water Department Commissioner Debra McCarty lives in a home built in the 19th century, which is still equipped with lead pipes.

So, every morning, McCarty runs her faucet for a few minutes to clear the water of any lead that may have gathered overnight before she drinks it, she testified at Monday at a City Council hearing on the lead levels Philly residents may find in their water.

"I actually do have a lead service line. … I run my water in the morning every day," she testified.

But that seemed to contradict McCarty's earlier testimony that "Philadelphia's drinking water is lead-free."

So which is it? Lead or no lead?

In the wake of the Flint, Michigan, water contamination crisis, Philadelphia City Council adopted a resolution to hold hearings concerning the Water Department's best practices and what measures the city can take to prevent lead exposure of residents.

Research shows even small levels of lead in water can have many negative effects — from affecting the cognitive development of young children to causing complications for pregnant woman.

According to McCarty and other officials, Philadelphia water transported along 3,200 miles of pipes from the Delaware and Schuylkill is clean — but old lead pipes in homes built before the 1950s, or old faucets and fixtures, can contaminate some residents' drinking water.

Water Department tests in 2014 found only 5 percent of Philly homes to have lead levels above the "action level" of 15 parts per billion.

> *"It's kind of like saying, 'I fixed my end, I don't need to do anything else.' I don't think that's the right attitude."* Bass

"Philly Water is not the source of the contamination," McCarty testified.

But clean water activists argued that they don't believe the Water Department is meeting the standards of the Environmental Protection Agency's Federal Lead and Copper Rule from 1992.

"I am frankly disgusted by the testimony of the Philadelphia Water Department and the misleading and the misdirection of the public we have heard here today," said Paul Schwartz, a D.C.-based activist with the Coalition for Lead Free Water. "They are sidestepping the EPA's regulations."

Schwartz said the Water Department "sidesteps" regulations by running taps and removing aerators (filters at the end of faucets that catch particulate matter like lead) before testing water, and doesn't concentrate enough testing on high-risk, aged homes.

The Water Department denied those charges — responding that tests of residents' water require letting water stagnate for six hours before testing it, and that they did test high-risk homes, but could not force people to get their pipes tested. In 2014, only 134 homes out of 8,000 contacted by the Water Department agreed to lead testing.

Councilwoman Cindy Bass, Chair of the Committee on Public Health and Human Services, questioned whether the Water Department bears no responsibility for what happens inside residents' homes.

"It's kind of like saying, 'I fixed my end, I don't need to do anything else.' I don't think that's the right attitude."

Moving forward, McCarty expressed an interest in pursuing more Water Department education programs to help residents figure out whether they have lead pipes and what they can do to reduce the risk of water contamination.

The Water Department also wants to expand their program offering low- or zero-interest loans to homeowners who are seeking to replace aged pipes.

Meanwhile, the School District committed at the hearing to a full inventory of water fountains after testimony that some students have limited access to water fountains in their schools. Both the Water and Health departments committed to expanding lead testing in childcare centers.

"When you deal with a really long-standing issue like lead, a problem that has been around for 50 years that deals with infrastructure, sometimes it's hard to reawaken interest around this issue and get people thinking about new possibilities to move forward," Councilwoman Helen Gym, chair of the Committee on Children and Youth, said after the hearing. "We have to move ahead and take some clear, actionable steps. I'm hoping we can come together and focus on what those can be, and begin to see some changes in the city in the near future."

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BRIEF

Two arrested in Archbishop Ryan High School shooting
The Philadelphia Police Department identified two suspects who were arrested over the weekend after allegedly shooting a 17-year-old in the leg behind Archbishop Ryan High School in Northeast Philly.

Joshua Sanchez, 19, of Gloucester, New Jersey, and Jonathan Rojas, 16, of Camden, New Jersey, are charged with aggravated assault, criminal conspiracy and gun charges.

The two allegedly approached a group of young people at the back woods behind the Catholic high school in Northeast Philly on Saturday evening.

They "walked up and approached the victim about buying some narcotics. The victim didn't know the males and they exchanged hostile words with each other," the original police report stated.

Sanchez, left, and Rojas PPD

An argument broke out, a third person appeared and shot the victim in the leg. He was hospitalized in stable condition after police reported to the baseball field behind the school.

Two bike cops patrolling the area located and arrested Sanchez and Rojas on the 3800 block of Elmore Place after determining that they matched the description of the suspects.

According to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, no Archbishop Ryan students were involved in the events surrounding the shooting, and the school is cooperating with the police investigation.

"The incident that occurred Saturday night was not connected to any activity sponsored by Archbishop Ryan High School. At this time, we have no indication that any students from Archbishop Ryan were involved," Archdiocese of Philadelphia spokesman Ken Gavin said in an email. "The school will cooperate fully with the Philadelphia Police Department in the course of its investigation. School administration has already communicated with school families regarding this matter and addressed it in school with the student body as well." SAM NEWHOUSE

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Trump GETTY IMAGES

Feds probe letter sent to Trump's sister: NBC

Maryanne Trump Barry is a federal appeals court judge in Philadelphia.

Federal authorities are investigating a threatening letter sent to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's sister, a federal appeals court judge in Philadelphia, according to NBC News.

Maryanne Trump Barry, 78, received the letter on Friday, the network's Philadelphia affiliate said in a report late on Sunday, citing a source familiar with the investigation.

Reuters could not immediately confirm the station's report.

Separately on Friday, officials said they were investigating a letter sent to Trump's son Eric that contained a granular substance.

The FBI and the Secret Service are investigating the letter to Trump's sister. The source told NBC that letter did not contain any white powder but did have the same threatening message that demands Trump drop his bid to be the Republican presidential nominee.

Trump is leading among the three remaining Republicans campaigning to represent the party in the Nov. 8 presidential election. REUTERS

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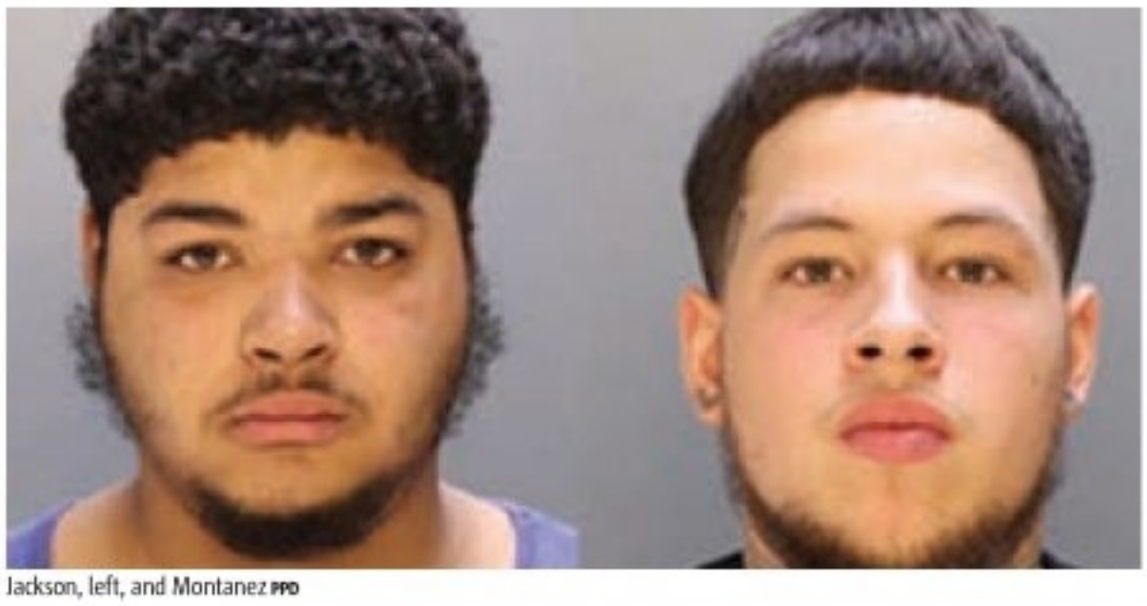

Jackson, left, and Montanez PPD

Second arrest in triple shooting that left two dead

The charges stem from a Jan. 3 incident in West Kensington that left two dead and a 17-year-old in critical condition.

JASON NUCKOLLS
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Philadelphia police have now charged a second suspect in connection to a January West Kensington triple shooting.

Last Thursday, suspect Angel Montanez, 19, surrendered to police and was subsequently charged with two counts of murder, one count of attempted murder and related charges, Philadelphia police said.

The charges stem from a shooting on Jan. 3 on West Wishart Street that left two people dead and a 17-year-old in critical condition with a gunshot wound in his face, according to police. The two deceased victims, Richard DaVilla, 47, and Raul Rodriguez, 21, were both found shot in the street, and they later died at Temple Hospital.

Suspect Ativa Jackson, 19, was taken into custody by police on Thursday, March 10, and was charged with two counts of murder, conspiracy and related weapons offenses, police stated.

Montanez, who lives on the 3200 block of North Hancock Street in Fairhill, surrendered with his attorney present, Philadelphia police added.

BRIEF

Ex-trooper who killed two in botched PA Turnpike robbery had recent bankruptcy

A Pennsylvania Turnpike employee and a contracted security guard were shot dead by a retired state trooper with financial troubles who was allegedly staging a robbery before being killed in a gunfight with officials.

On Sunday, retired state trooper Clarence Briggs allegedly shot and killed the two workers near the Fort Littleton toll plaza while trying to rob an armored car, the Associated Press reported at Philly.com. Court records showed that Briggs had filed for bankruptcy last year, having amassed over $300,000 in debt with his wife.

Turnpike employee Danny Crouse and security guard Ronald Heist were shot by Briggs at the toll plaza around 7 a.m. on Sunday in his attempted armored car robbery, the Daily Mail reported. The pair were at the toll plaza at the Fort Littleton Interchange west of Harrisburg when the vehicle targeted by Briggs arrived.

Briggs managed to gain control of the armored car after shooting and killing Crouse and Heist, but he was confronted by a state trooper and shot dead as he was attempting to move money into his private vehicle not far from the toll plaza, the Daily Mail added.

Besides the debt and bankruptcy records, Briggs had also been charged with assault and harassment in March 2014, but the charges were dismissed four months later, according to the AP article reported by Philly.com.

Trooper Jeff Petrucci told the Daily Mail that Briggs retired honorably in January 2012 from the Newville Turnpike police division where he had served for 26 years.

JASON NUCKOLLS

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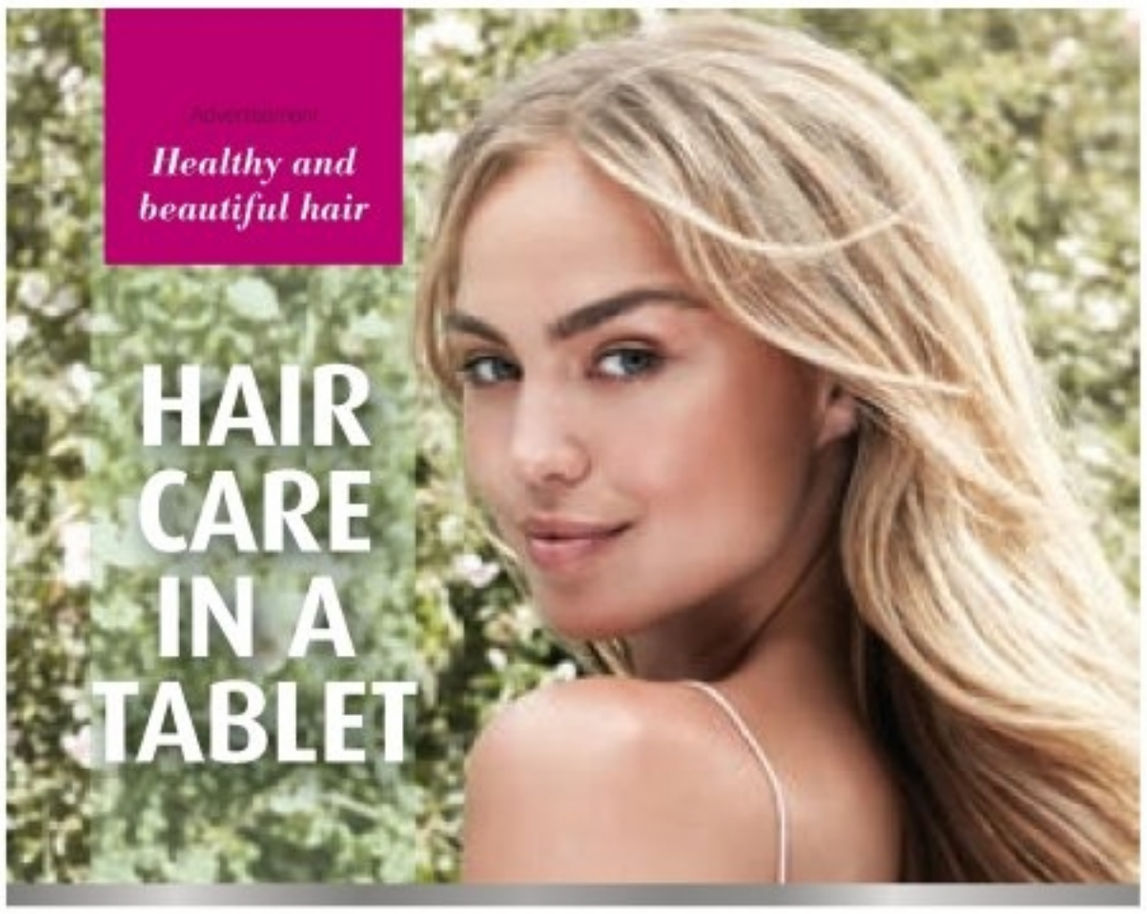

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NJ mall's Easter Bunny brawls with upset dad

A video still from the brawl PROVIDED

A man employed as the Easter Bunny at a New Jersey mall brawled with a father whose child slipped to the floor while having a picture taken with the costumed character, authorities said on Monday, stunning shoppers watching the mayhem unfold.

Jersey City Police were investigating possible charges against the 22-year-old man playing the Easter Bunny at Newport Centre Mall and the father of the 1-year-old girl, said city spokeswoman Jennifer Morrill.

After the child slid out of the photo-op chair on Sunday afternoon, the father began to verbally and physically attack the bunny, the costumed cottontail told police.

"A fight ensued between both the father and the Easter Bunny," Morrill said in an email, and both were taken to the Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas Health with minor injuries.

As rabbits go, the mall's Easter Bunny looked more like Harvey, the towering 6-footer who befriended by Jimmy Stewart in the 1950 movie classic, than little Peter Cottontail.

Video posted online after the incident shows a hulking character wearing a white fuzzy suit and a royal blue top coat and tails throwing punches before being separated from the other man by mall goers.

Suddenly he stalks back toward the man, rips off the fuzzy gloves and starts swinging, the video shows. He is soon brought to the ground by customers and security officers at the mall, located across the Hudson River from lower Manhattan.

"No charges have been filed at this time as detectives are continuing to investigate and speak with witnesses as it remains unclear who initiated the incident," Morrill said.

The spokeswoman did not say whether the parent had offered a different version of events, adding that no more information was immediately available. REUTERS

BRIEF

Pair charged for hosting party with marijuana, alcohol for hundreds of teens: Police

A couple was arraigned Monday after authorities said they allowed a wild party of hundreds of teenagers — which included alcohol and marijuana — to take place at their Drexel Hill home, according to reports.

Abdul Ahmaddiya, 54, and Nichelle Davis-Ahmaddiya, 45, are facing charges of corruption of minors, disorderly conduct and providing alcohol to underage teens, reported 6ABC Philadelphia.

6ABC added that on March 19 at about 10:30 p.m., Upper Darby police received dozens of 911 calls reporting underage drinking and loud behavior.

Upper Darby Police Superintendent Michael Chitwood told 6ABC that first responding police officers saw about a hundred teenagers outside of the home at the 3900 block of Mary Street. Many more teens were seen inside the house and all allegedly dispersed when they saw police.

Abdul Ahmaddiya and Nichelle Davis-Ahmaddiya UPPER DARBY POLICE DEPARTMENT

According to police, as many as 300 teens were at the party. It took authorities hours to clear the neighborhood, 6ABC reported.

Abdul Ahmaddiya allegedly confronted police and said the teenagers were allowed to drink and smoke marijuana in his house, according to 6ABC.

A 17-year-old girl — reportedly the couple's daughter — was also given a citation for disorderly conduct and underage consumption of alcohol, Philly Voice reported. According to police, she allegedly promoted the party on social media.

Abdul Ahmaddiya was arrested in the morning of March 20 and Nichelle Davis-Ahmaddiya turned herself in Monday morning.

"This is totally unacceptable behavior, and that's why we arrested the parents. Their actions were totally irresponsible, and they endangered all the youth that were there," Chitwood said, according to the Philly Voice. "When the teens scattered when police arrived, they ran through the neighborhood creating havoc, causing disruption to the quality of life and terrorizing the neighborhood." ANGY ALTAMIRANO

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Dog was left for weeks tied by wire to staircase

Animal cruelty prevention officers in suburban Philadelphia recently rescued a dog that was left tied with a wire to a bannister inside an Upper Darby home for three to four weeks.

"Clover," as the 6-month-old shepherd-pit-bull terrier mix was named by Delco SPCA staff, was discovered by the Upper Darby home's property manager, who contacted Humane Society police officer Ron Riggle.

Clover was found in a home on Clover Lane in Upper Darby tied to a bannister with a cable wire, which she chewed herself free from. She is believed to have been left in these conditions for three to four weeks.

"We're lucky that she didn't decapitate herself, starve to death, or both," Riggle said in a statement.

The Delco SPCA provided emergency surgery "to clean and remove the diseased tissue," according to a press release. The Delco SPCA said she will require follow-up procedures to "repair her destroyed neck muscles" and her care is estimated to cost more than $3,000.

The dog is doing fine, according to the Delco SPCA.

"Clover's disposition is as if nothing is wrong," the Delco SPCA said in a press release.

Riggle is currently investigating the case "to prosecute the person responsible for the cruelty," according to the Delco SPCA.

"Any possible charges can't yet be discussed due to the sensitivity of the case but we are taking the damages done to Clover very seriously and prepared to do whatever it takes to keep Clover safe and bring her justice," spokeswoman Justina Calgiano said in a statement.

Clover in bandages PROVIDED

An underweight but otherwise unharmed female cat, named "Charmer" by the SPCA, was also found in the home.

Visit delcospca.org to donate online to Clover's care, or send a donation to the Delco SPCA at 555 Sandy Bank Road, Media, PA 19063. SAM NEWHOUSE

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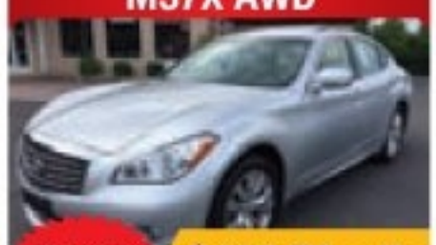
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US prosecuting fewer drug offenses: Justice Department

A 14 percent decrease from fiscal 2012 to 2014 was followed by an additional 6 percent decline to 19,792 federal cases prosecuted in fiscal 2015, the department reported.

A narcotics task force enters a home of a suspected drug dealer in Manassas Park, Virginia. GETTY IMAGES

U.S. prosecutors charged nearly 5,000 fewer drug cases in 2015 than three years earlier, after the Obama administration decided to target only the most serious cases, the Justice Department said Monday.

While state prosecutors can take on drug cases, federal prosecutors have been instructed since 2013 to charge fewer drug offenders to reduce disparities in sentencing that disproportionately affect minorities.

The policy, known as Smart on Crime, was also intended to avoid charging certain nonviolent, low-level drug offenders with the mandatory minimum sentence.

The Justice Department said 47 percent of the drug cases prosecuted in 2015 carried the mandatory minimum sentence, compared with 61.5 percent in 2012.

Some assistant U.S. attorneys had raised concerns that lower sentences would make defendants less willing to cooperate.

But Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates said the rate of cooperation has not changed. "It is always going to be in a defendant's interest to do whatever he or she can to be able to cooperate and to get a lower sentence," she told reporters at a briefing.

Yates said she was hopeful bipartisan support for sentencing reform in Congress would result in legislation this year, preventing policies like Smart on Crime from being dropped by the next administration.

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Supreme Court agrees to hear patent fight with Samsung-Apple

The United States Supreme Court stepped into the high-profile patent fight between the world's two fiercest smartphone rivals, Apple and Samsung, agreeing to hear Samsung's appeal of what it contends were excessive penalties for copying the patented designs of the iPhone.

Samsung Electronics paid Apple Inc. more than $548 million in December related to a jury verdict from 2012. It is seeking to pare back the $399 million of that amount that was awarded for infringing on the designs of the iPhone's rounded-corner front face, bezel and colorful grid of icons, saying they contributed only marginally to a complex device.

A Samsung spokeswoman said in a statement the Supreme Court's review "can lead to a fair interpretation of patent law that will support creativity and reward innovation."

An Apple representative declined to comment.

Apple sued in 2011, claiming the South Korean electronics company stole its technology and ripped off the look of the iPhone.

Last May, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington upheld the 2012 patent-infringement verdict.

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Samsung GETTY IMAGES

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Clinton criticizes Trump's neutral stance on Israel

Clinton told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference that Trump would undermine Israel's security by taking an even-handed approach to negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Hillary Clinton attacked Republican Donald Trump on Monday for taking a neutral stance toward Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, in a preview of a possible general election battle between them.

Clinton GETTY IMAGES

"America can't ever be neutral when it comes to Israel's security and survival," Clinton told the pro-Israel lobbying group, without mentioning Trump by name. "Anyone who doesn't understand that has no business being our president."

Trump, the Republican front-runner, was to address the AIPAC conference later in the day, along with his Republican rivals, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and Ohio Gov. John Kasich. Clinton's Democratic challenger, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, was not appearing at the event.

Trump has drawn fire for his position on Middle East peace negotiations. The billionaire has described himself as extremely pro-Israel but has said he would take a "neutral" stance in trying to negotiate an elusive peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. REUTERS

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Trump names his foreign policy team led by Sen. Sessions

Donald Trump on Monday unveiled a partial list of his foreign policy advisers in an interview with The Washington Post, after saying last week that he mostly consults himself on international affairs.

The advisory team, headed by Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, includes terrorism expert Walid Phares, energy industry executive Carter Page, international energy lawyer George Papadopoulos, former government inspector general Joe Schmitz, and former Army Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, he told the Post in an on-the-record editorial board meeting, according to the media company.

REUTERS

Sen. Jeff Sessions GETTY IMAGES

BRIEF

Trump 'needs all the help he can get,' donors say

Donald Trump often tells crowds at his campaign rallies that he doesn't need outside financial support to get to the White House, but some of his fans are starting to feel differently.

Donors to an independent political spending group formed to promote Trump's candidacy said in interviews on Sunday they were worried by reports describing the millions of dollars Trump's opponents are spending to attack him.

They said they admired the billionaire businessman's professed financial independence but thought a cash boost would help keep his fight for the Republican nomination fair. So 767 people sent in small sums — $25 here, $100 there — hoping it would help prepare him to face his many, moneyed foes.

"He needs all the help he can get," said Diane Abair, 83, a real estate agent in Redding, California, who sent $50 to the group, Great America PAC.

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Justin Bieber has more throwback pics of Selena Gomez

@JUSTINBEIBER/INSTAGRAM

Damn, Justin. At it again with the creepy/desperate Instagram posts about your ex. The singer lit up his favorite social media feed recently with yet another throwback pic of himself — from way back in 2011 or so, before all the tattoos and Photoshopped muscle mass and arrests — smooching ex-girlfriend Selena Gomez along with the caption "Feels," all to the delight of his 62.2 million Instagram followers. (Just sit there a second and think about that number. Terrifying, isn't it?)

This is far from the first time Bieber has reminisced about the good old days so publicly. But he has been pretty quiet about it, laying off the borderline stalker behavior for nearly three months. But that's about all the restraint he could muster. For her part, Gomez did "like" the photo, leaving fans to wonder even more what exactly is going on between the two.

Khloe Kardashian klashing with 'Kocktails' krew

Apparently when Khloe Kardashian made the deal for her new talk show, "Kocktails with Khloe," she didn't quite understand how much the show's producers were expecting her to rope in her family as guests, and that's causing some tension behind the scenes.

"Executives have urged her to include at least one of her family members on every single episode," a source tells Radar Online. "The producers at the network really believe that people are tuning in to the show to see the off-script Kardashian drama carry over into 'Kocktails.'

"But now Khloe said that she does not need to have them on for this show to succeed. Everyone around her tends to disagree." Ouch.

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@kirstiealley
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FYI, this is not the next tweet. This is an interim tweet.

@Courtney
Back in London, always feels like home

Fans have very different reactions to Harry Styles and Adele photo hacks

Two of the U.K.'s most famous stars are scrambling to deal with not one but two new cases of nefarious pic-snatching. Which raises the question: How much of a celebrity's life belongs to their fans?

First, personal photos of Adele, including a sonogram scan of her son, showed up on Facebook, believed to be from a hack of boyfriend Simon Konecki's email. "I was appalled and upset for Adele when I saw the pictures. They are really private and should not be passed around," a fan who reported the posting tells the Sun. "It is disgusting that her so-called fans were sending them around and I thought it should be stopped."

Not every fan feels the same. Apparently someone else hacked the iCloud account of Harry Styles' mom, Anne Cox, and made away with several photos of Styles on vacation with rumored girlfriend Kendall Jenner. The fan who posted them sounds quite disgruntled — for an entirely different reason: "If I go to jail, I did this for all the Harry stans who don't get s— from Harry," the privacy invader posted to Twitter before the account was suspended.

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Dame Helen wants feminists to speak out

Helen Mirren plays a colonel leading a drone bombing mission in Kenya from a London base in the drama "Eye in the Sky." KEITH BERNSTEIN, BLEECKER STREET

The Oscar-winning actress talks drones, sexism and whether she looks like Jennifer Lawrence.

MATT PRIGGE
@mattprigge
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Dame Helen Mirren is never not opinionated. That's doubly so when talking "Eye in the Sky," a British drama about drone warfare. Mostly unfolding in real time, it traces as forces, from her colonel in London to a drone pilot (Aaron Paul) in Las Vegas, try to blow up a house containing terrorists — without accidentally killing a little girl playing near their target. Our conversation ranges from heavy subjects to one that's tabloid-light.

How did your thoughts on drones evolve on this film?

You know, you can't just say, "Drones — what's my take on drones?" Well, I don't want a drone coming into my back garden and taking pictures of me sunbathing. But I'm sure as a surveillance tool, it's incredibly valuable and useful. You might as well say, "What's your attitude about telephones?" People can phone each other up and plan terrible things. Do we ban telephones? It's a technology we're going to have to live with. So the question becomes how and where do we use them, or not use them?

This is a drama with a woman on the poster. Do you see Hollywood moving away from a purely boy- and superhero-driven landscape?

Yes, of course it will. People do need to speak up. I learned this with feminism. I've always been a feminist, but when I was younger I was never a proselytizing feminist. I totally believed in my right to do and be whatever I wanted to be, and anything that was holding me back was profoundly unfair. But I never joined a feminist group. But you know what? You do need to speak up, you do need to articulate the issues. And you get s— for it, you get mocked for it. But you're on the right side of history when you speak up. And things do change. Dialogue is really important.

Mirren = JLaw?

I did want to ask if you've seen those web posts with side-by-side comparisons of younger pictures of you and Jennifer Lawrence now. The resemblance is uncanny.

A little bit, yeah. She is much more beautiful than I ever was. I'm not being self-depreciating. She's much, much more beautiful. But there are certain shots that I look a little bit like her. I should be so lucky, is all I can say. [Laughs]

It's been heartening that, over the last year, pieces about diversity and inequality have actually done well with readers. They get shared online. It's good for business, finally, to talk about it.

You journalists are very important, because for so long you didn't talk about it. It's funny: You can talk till your f—ing blue in the face. I've done interviews all my life and I've always talked about it. Did anyone print it? No. [Laughs] Now it's in the zeitgeist, which is great. Mind you, that will pass as well. But the genie's out of the bottle.

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‘The Nest’ is spring’s buzziest family drama

Author Cynthia D’Aprix Sweeney tells us what inspired her debut novel that everyone is talking about.

EMILY LAURENCE
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It’s every writer’s dream to land a million-dollar book deal from a big-name publishing house, and it’s one debut author Cynthia D’Aprix Sweeney is living. Editors at essentially every major magazine as well as The New York Times are raving about her book “The Nest,” which comes out today.

A family drama about three adult siblings confronting their screwup brother about squandering their collective trust fund, the heart of the book is more about emotional costs, not financial ones. We talked with Sweeney to learn more about the book and becoming a first-time fiction writer in her 40s.

What inspired the book and its characters?

I knew I wanted to write about adult siblings who were not really connected. So then it was a matter of [figuring out] why they were at odds with one another. I started thinking about why they were estranged from one another and why [each person] needed the money.

Did you know how everything was going to unfold from the start?

No, I knew very little. I started writing the story while I was in graduate school [at Columbia] and Bret Anthony Johnston [author of “Remember Me Like This”] was my adviser. The first question I asked him was, “How much do I need to know about the end?” And he said, “You don’t need to know anything, but it will help if you have a sense of where you want each character to leave off emotionally.” So that was my little lighthouse in the distance.

Cynthia D’Aprix Sweeney USA WHITEMAN

Novels about family drama can be breezy, but “The Nest” is more emotional and complex.

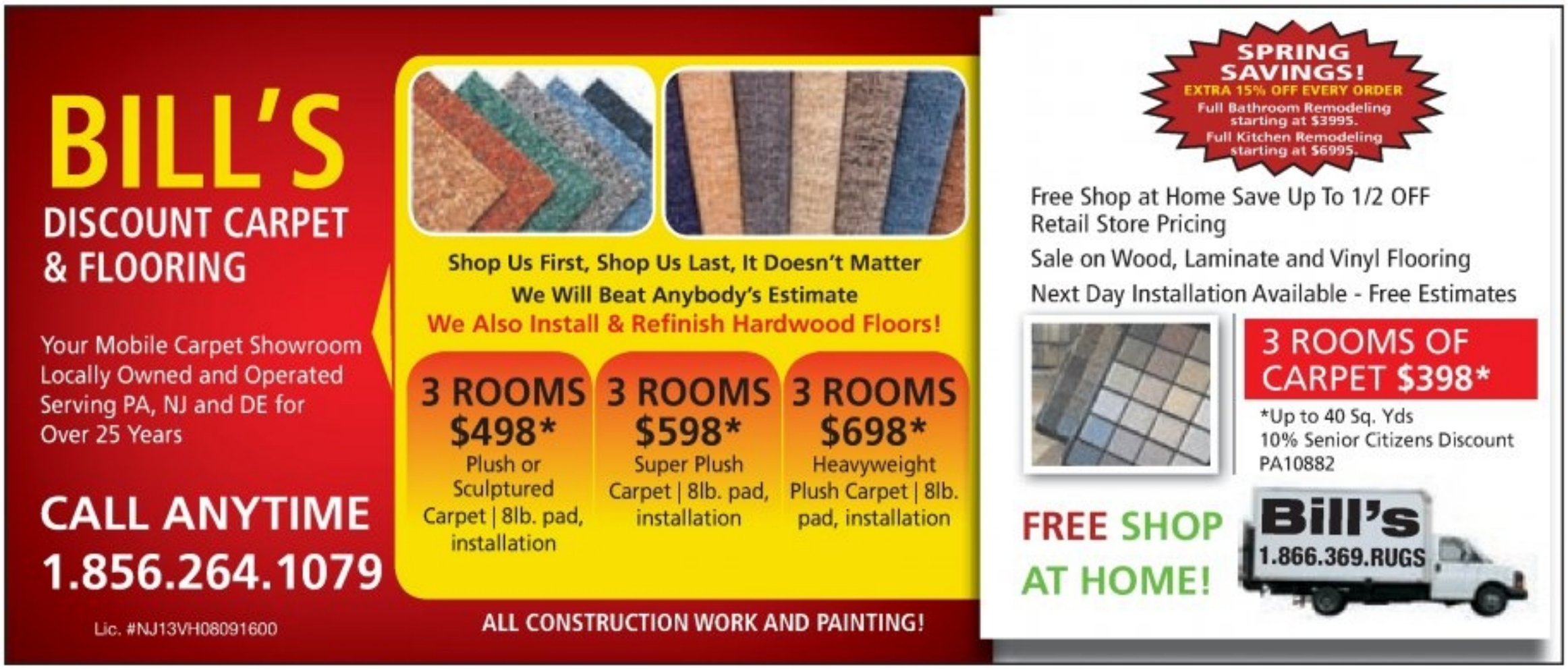
I learned that if I didn’t fully love a character and genuinely care about what happened to him or her, then that character wasn’t working yet. I had to go back and find their vulnerabilities and work from that place, not a place of judgment. … For me, it was necessary to make the characters not just feel like a type of person I wanted to create to make a point about something but be people who are complicated. They are despicable, but also worthy of love.

Your background is as a journalist. Was it hard for you to start writing fiction?

It was hard for me to get to the point where I felt I was doing it well. My first efforts were pretty terrible. It was one reason why I decided to get my [master of fine arts degree]. I felt if I had the structure of a fiction-writing program with deadlines and support, and people giving me regular feedback on my work, that I would figure out what I was doing wrong more quickly, which is true.

What is your own family like?

Nothing like the people in the book! There are four of us [kids]. I’m the oldest. We’re all pretty close, although we try to stay out of each other’s way. We’re scattered geographically, so we get together a few times a year and there is always one really heated argument, sometimes more. But we’re also really quick to forgive each other. I’m always a little distrustful of people who have zero family drama.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rachel.raczka@metro.us

Michael Carbonaro uses his magic for good — not evil. The truTV prankster regularly pulls the rug out from under unsuspecting everyday people on his hidden camera TV show, but he wants you to know that he means well.

"I have a really strict moral code as to what's fair game and what's not," the 33-year-old New York native tells us. "It's a playful trap, not a surprise you're falling into. Words like 'target' or a 'mark' or 'trap,' they all feel negative, and if anything makes the show — magic and my own B.S. aside — it's the people and how they react. They're the hero and the star of the show. A 'mark' implies a decoy or a dunce, and I want to let them shine. The more they talk, the better the trick is."

The second season of "The Carbonaro Effect" premieres March 23, and the magician/improv artist — who disguises himself as a clerk, service provider or other professional for each spot — puts his co-stars in seemingly unbelievable situations. For example: a farmers' market juicer that produces gallons of OJ from a single fruit. Or a local dog washer that compresses pups into discs the size of a vinyl record. The reactions are as ridiculous as Carbonaro's backstories, but the popularity of his show has made it harder for him to go unrecognized.

"It's a good thing if you like wearing wigs," he laughs. "I wore a bunch of characters this season and we'd try to be savvy about it, but if people know about the show already, I find flat denial works. I had someone just tell me, 'Oh you remind me of Michael Carbonaro.' And I was like, 'Who is that? I don't watch TV,' and I can still lead them down the path of believing."

Plus, everyone loves a little magic — even Shaq. Carbonaro met the retired NBA mega star Shaquille O'Neal during a press junket, heard he was a fan of the show and decided to get him involved. O'Neal guest stars in the season premiere, playing along with a prank involving a kitchen product endorsement that goes awry. Plus — Carbonaro adds, "I just love that Shaq is my lovely assistant."

The second season of "The Carbonaro Effect" premieres March 23 at 10 p.m. on truTV.

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Wanna try it? Four Sigmatic's mushroom-infused coffees and hot chocolates are available at Whole Foods. **ALL IMAGES PROVIDED**

WAIT, drinking mushrooms is a thing?

Apparently, it's all the rage in Finland.

EMILY LAURENCE
@EmLaurence
emily.laurence@metro.us

Pounding coconut water? OK, we're game. Cactus water? Sure, why not. But mushrooms? Woah there. It turns out, drinking 'shrooms isn't such a bad idea — and no, we're not talking about the psychedelic kind.

Finland native Tero Isokauppila grew up on a farm, foraging for mushrooms, and is now spreading the gospel of the "superfood" with the power to reduce stress and lower blood pressure and cholesterol.

Humans are essentially mushrooms

When we hung out with Isokauppila recently, he told us that most people are surprised to learn that nearly half of our genetic makeup is the same as a mushroom's. Because of that, we share the same survival methods. So if we're feeling a bit sick because our immune system isn't functioning properly, eating mushrooms can help us recover faster. Another surprising fact Isokauppila tells us: Mushrooms are in 40 percent of medicine. Now you know why.

Bringing the craze Stateside

There are different kinds of mushrooms, and not all are created equal (some are even poisonous). There are four kinds that Isokauppila says are especially healthful: Reishi, Cordyceps, Chaga and Lion's Mane. And it is these four types that his beverage line of mushroom-infused coffees and hot chocolates, Four Sigmatic, revolves around.

Lion's Mane helps with concentration, making it the perfect ingredient for his coffee mix. Reishi is a big stress-reducer, so he uses it as the base ingredient in one of his hot chocolate mixes. Cordyceps and Chaga are both high in antioxidants and good for your immune system.

Isokauppila tells us mushrooms are more common to eat and drink in Finland, but he knew that to get Americans on board he needed to sweeten the deal, so to speak. Isokauppila snuck the superfood into hot chocolate and coffee mixes, which are sold at Whole Foods, Urban Outfitters and Amazon. A couple New York City cafes have also started selling mushroom-infused drinks too, including Brooklyn's Botica and Caravan of Dreams in the East Village.

But how does it taste?

A tasting of the different mushroom-infused beverages at the Metro offices received mixed reviews. Some downright didn't like it at all, some said it got better as you drank it, while a few genuinely liked it. "I had one of the coffee mixes and it made me feel alert, like a normal cup of coffee, but didn't make me feel jittery," one staffer reported. Hey, you can always just eat the mushrooms.

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How to make sure your baby is getting the right nutrition

For busy parents, having healthy on-the-go snacks handy is a lifesaver. But often, food touted as "healthy," well, isn't. To make things more transparent, organic baby food company Happy Family took a new step this month launching a new product line for babies older than 6 months, Clearly Crafted, so parents can more easily see what exactly they are feeding their child.

"Our company really values that parents know exactly what is in the food they are giving their kids. So for us, the first step was launching a clear pouch so you can literally see what's in it," Happy Family founder and CEO Shazi Visram tells us. "And second, we have all the information for preparing the foods, including where the ingredients are grown and who prepares them." Here, Visram shares with us her tips for making sure your little ones are eating all the right stuff.

Nutritional guidelines for kids changes rapidly the first few years. ISTOCK

1 Teach your kids about food early on.

"Help your kids develop a healthy relationship with food as early as possible," Visram says. Taking your kids with you to the supermarket and picking out fresh fruits and veggies together as well as having them in the kitchen while you cook both will help foster a healthy relationship with food.

2 Know exactly what your child needs at every age.

Between the ages 1 and 5, the nutritional guidelines for kids changes, so Visram tells us it's important to know exactly what they need as they grow. This is so important, she's based the way Happy Family's labels look based on it. "We show the exact proportions of each fruit and vegetable [on the label] instead of making it a guessing game," she says.

3 Speak up at pediatric appointments.

If you have any questions at all about nutrition, your child's pediatrician is there to help. "It's up to the parent to say, 'I want to learn about my son or daughter's health,'" Visram says. If your child has any allergies, they can also recommend specific foods that will ensure your child is getting all the vitamins he or she on might be otherwise missing out on. "The more information you have, the better choices you can make," Visram says. EMILY LAURENCE

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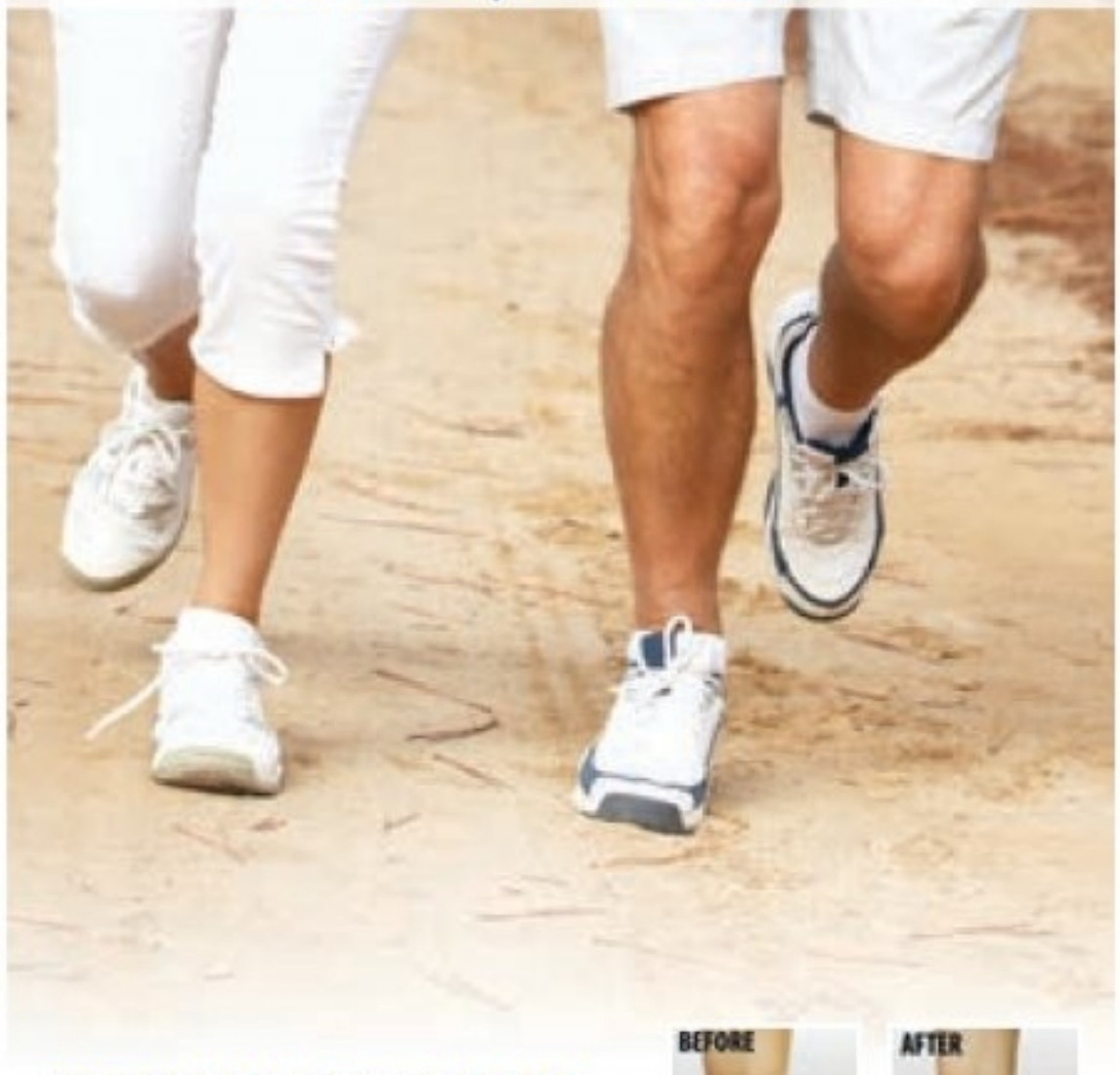

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If I had their ear, here's what I'd tell 'em:

Dave Hakstol

Throw in rookie goalie Anthony Stolarz right away. Let's find out if the kid can play.

The Flyers' playoff chances took a huge blow last weekend when backup goalie Michal Neuvirth was declared out for the rest of the regular season – at least. With four sets of back-to-back games looming, it's foolish to expect the always-fragile Steve Mason to suddenly become an Iron Horse.

So the coach should let the 22-year-old Stolarz wet his feet, as early as Tuesday against the doormat Blue Jackets. If the 6-foot-6 rookie plays well, Hakstol should give him another chance. And then another.

And what if the kid shows flashes? Hey, the Flyers didn't have a No. 1 goalie three days ago. I'm not sure Mason should win the job by default. NHL playoff history is packed with stories of untested rookies who dominated — from Cam Ward to Antti Niemi to some kid named Dryden, who won a Cup before he even qualified as a rookie.

Flyers' management regards Stolarz as the goalie of the future. Maybe we can get a little peek of that future now.

Jerry Colangelo

If you win the NBA lottery, immediately make the call to Duke wingman Brandon Ingram. I'm speaking to Colangelo here because I believe GM-in-name Sam Hinkie has finally, mercifully, been neutered.

Anyway, we all expected the top draft prize would be LSU freshman Ben Simmons. But Simmons, as Charles Barkley pointed out, "just went through the motions" this season. Take that as a foreboding of how he'd quit on a poor NBA team — say, one that's 9-61 right now.

Ingram, meanwhile, has the outside shot and passing skills that would help spread the floor around Okafor, Embiid and Noel (assuming at least two of those big men are here next season).

Oh, and if the 76ers somehow get lucky twice, and wind up with the Lakers' top pick (a 44 percent chance that LA falls out of the top three), they should nab Oklahoma guard Buddy Hield. The senior went off for 36 points Sunday and has hit more than 46 percent of his 3-pointers this season.

Ingram and Hield? Now that's a process I can believe in.

The Sixers should target Duke's Brandon Ingram. GETTY IMAGES

Howie Roseman

Yes, grab Notre Dame tackle Ronnie Stanley if he falls to Pick 8, or take one of the QBs — Carson Wentz or Jared Goff. But if they're gone, don't fall into the zombie mindset that you can't pick a running back in the first round.

Prevailing wisdom says any RB taken early is doomed to become the next Trent Richardson. While some cautionary tales have some merit, not every case is the same. Ohio State's Ezekiel Elliott seems like that transcendent talent who can win Rookie of the Year and make his team about two games better. In the NFC East, two games better might be enough to win the division

Ahh, if they'd only listen to me.

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New dance partners

After cruising through the first weekend of the 2016 NCAA men's basketball tournament, the Villanova Wildcats will now turn their attention to the Miami Hurricanes. Villanova and Miami will square off on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. (CBS) in Louisville, Kentucky. GETTY IMAGES

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Union starting 2016 MLS season off on the right foot

So far, so good for the Union in 2016 MLS season.

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C.J. Sapong and the Union are 2-1-0 so far in 2016. GETTY IMAGES

If the Union's (2-1-0) dominating 3-0 home-opening win over the New England Revolution (0-1-2) Sunday is any indication, the 2016 season could finally pay dividends for a starving fan base that is itching to get back to the postseason.

The Union are starting the season off on the right foot, tied for first place in the Eastern Conference standings and riding a two-game win streak. It's the Union's best start since 2013 and confidence is soaring high among this young group.

"We thought it was critical to have a good start [to the season]," Union manager Jim Curtin said. "I think Earnie Stewart came in and laid a good foundation with the group, setting a higher standard with training harder. Our attention to detail is better, so all those little things I think you are seeing on the field. … We are better now than last year, but that's not saying much because last year we were bad."

The Union finished a measly 10-17-7 last season, tied for the fourth-worst record in the league. They won back-to-back matches just once all season. After an offseason full of front office and roster changes, the Union look focused and confident in the early going this year.

"I knew the mentality was right with this team after [the win over] Columbus last week," Union forward Chris Pontius said. "We came in here a confident team and then you get your main striker [C.J. Sapong] two goals and get him feeling good, so we're a dangerous team going forward — got our first clean sheet of the year and that's important for us too."

Sapong and Pontius are tied for second in the MLS in scoring with two goals each. When Sapong is clicking offensively, the Union are one of the most dangerous teams in the East. Despite their final record, the Union were a respectable 4-4-1 in games where Sapong netted a goal last season.

The Union will next face the Chicago Fire (0-1-2) at 5 p.m. on the road Saturday.

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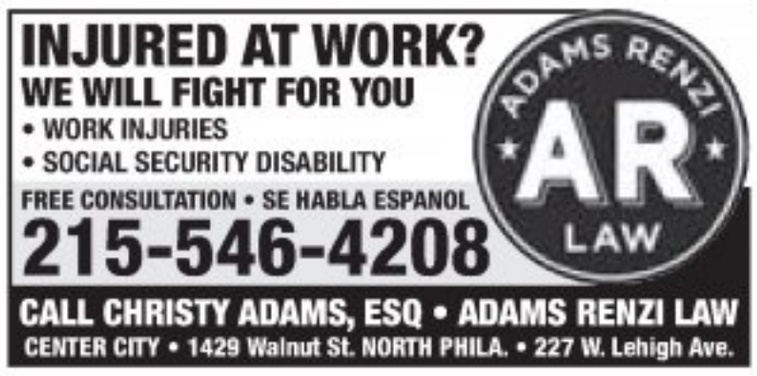
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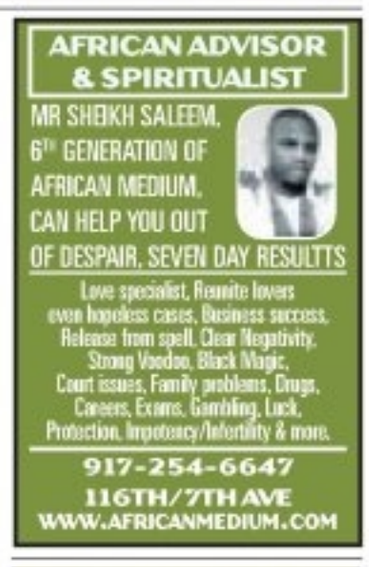
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LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE

Pursuant to the Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act, the Act of May 19, 1995, P.L. #4, No. 2 (Act 2), notice is hereby given that the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation is submitting a Final Report to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Southeastern Regional Office, for the site known as Municipal Piers 31 through 35, located at 601 North Columbus Boulevard, City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Site). Development plans include construction of a multi-story Commercial and Residential use structure at the site. The site is the former location of the East Central Incinerator. Some PAHs and some metals have been detected in soil; the presence of some PCBs in soil is inconclusive regarding exceedance of the soil to groundwater MSCs. No VOCs, or PAHs were detected in groundwater, however, the presence of some VOCs, PAHs, metals, and PCBs in groundwater is inconclusive due to laboratory reporting limits exceeding the Residential Used Aquifer MSCs. The Final Report provides the data to support a demonstration of attainment of Site Specific Standards in soil by elimination of exposure pathways through engineering controls, and Statewide Health Standards for Groundwater through collection of quarterly groundwater attainment data. Comments should be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast Regional Office, Land Recycling/ Cleanup Division, 2 East Main Street, Norristown, Pennsylvania 19401.

NOTICE

Pursuant to the Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act, the Act of May 19, 1995, P.L. #4, No. 2 (Act 2), notice is hereby given that the Provco Group (Remediator) is submitting a Remedial Investigation Report/ Cleanup Plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Southeastern Regional Office, for the property known as Aramingo Avenue and Wheatsheaf Lane, in the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Site), for a release associated with historic use of the property as a former pipe manufacturing and storage yard. The site will be developed with commercial buildings. Some volatile organic compounds and lead were detected in soil; and some volatile organic compounds, lead and some semi-volatile organic compounds were detected in groundwater at the site. Remediation will include pathway elimination using Site Specific Standards for impacted soil, and demonstration of attainment of Residential Statewide Health or Site Specific Standards for groundwater. Questions and comments should be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast Regional Office, Land Recycling/Cleanup Division, 2 East Main Street, Norristown, Pennsylvania 19401.

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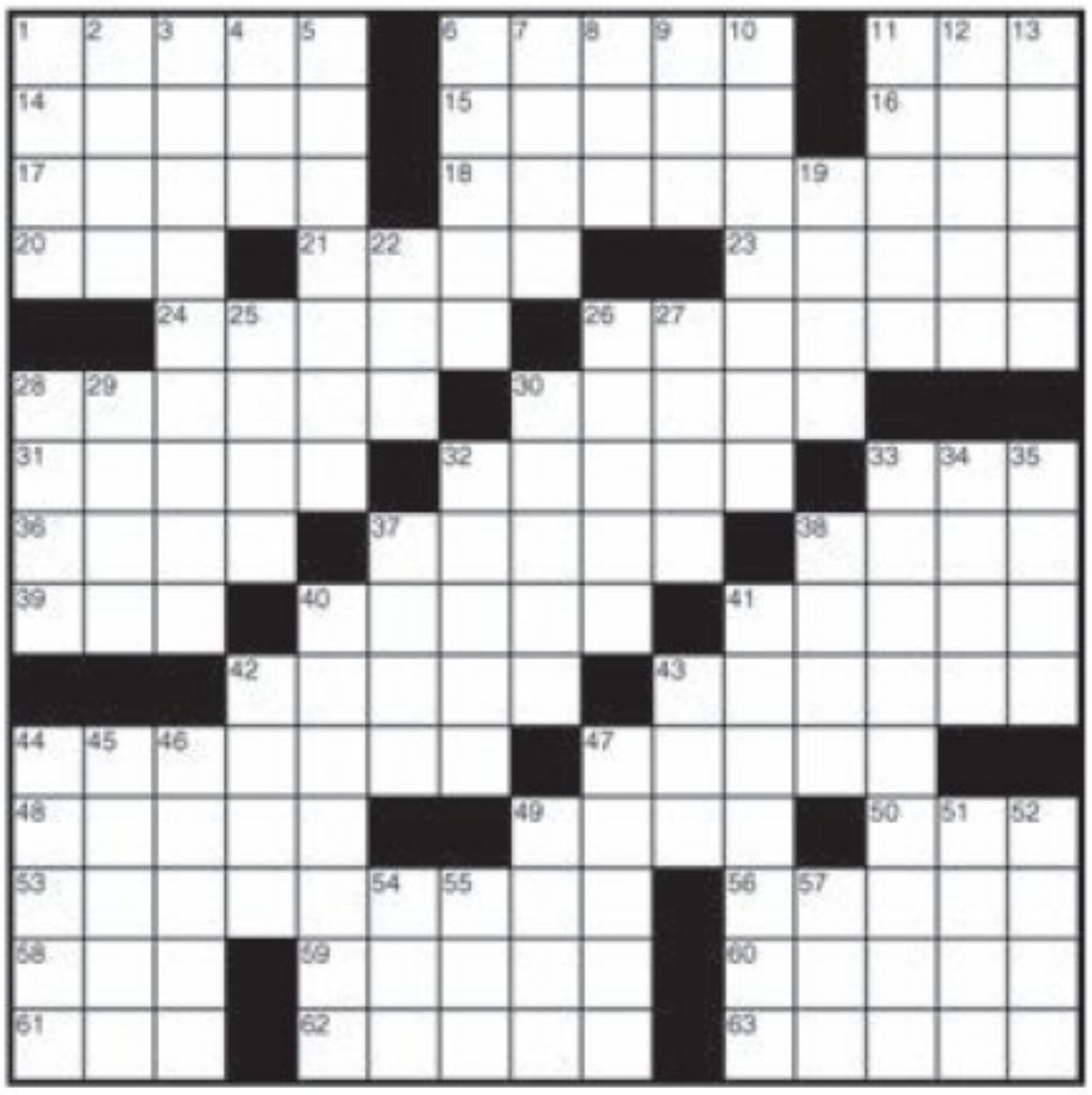

Across

1 Couch potato's option
6 Sigh or murmur
11 — out (relax)
14 Coil or spiral
15 Ear pollution?
16 Rower's need
17 Burned up
18 Low-voiced woman
20 Kernel's quarters
21 Croissant
23 Brownies
24 Be in a shower
26 Dins
28 Bends
30 Tends the hens
31 Enticed
32 Frigid and Torrid
33 Caesar's law
36 Malt beverages
37 Horned animals
38 Do dock work
39 Leaf out
40 Road shoulders
41 Worm seeker
42 Long time
43 Colombia's capital
44 Tall cactus
47 Knight wear?
48 Missouri range
49 Be impatient
50 Genre
53 Type of squash
56 Wed secretly
58 Before, to bards
59 Rummage through
60 Beauty aid
61 Cheerful color
62 Hits hard
63 Ms. Sarandon

Down

1 Trendy
2 Space lead-in
3 Tattled
4 Afire
5 Put forth effort
6 Male relative
7 Cat's-paw
8 Pewter component
9 PST minus 3
10 Goes over again
11 Car import
12 Dinner guest
13 Make before taxes
19 Poor-box donations
22 Sighs of distress
25 Hatchets
26 Loose change
27 Wine sediments
28 "Spare tire"
29 Doozy
30 Gets frothy
32 Don Diego masked
33 Very difficult
34 Fix typos
35 Lawless role
37 Forward or reverse
38 Corp. symbol
40 Lab glassware
41 Tot's outfit
42 Round dwelling
43 Bikini half
44 Like a judge
45 Shade of blue
46 Like some communities
47 Gambling stakes
49 Mope
51 Links org.
52 Finely sharpened
54 Sugarloaf locale
55 Gridiron div.
57 Piniella of the diamond

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easy

5	6			9				
	9				5	7		3
3			6		4			8
4			3				1	
			8		1			
	7				6			2
8			9		2			4
2		9	5				8	
				3			2	5

hard

			4					2
	7							
	8	6	1		2	7	3	9
			3		4		2	
9	4			7			6	1
	2		8		6			
7	3	1	6		9	4	8	
							1	
2					1			

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Professional changes are within reach. Pursue your goals instead of just dreaming about them. Call in favors and connect with people you have worked with in the past.

Taurus Personal adjustments will eliminate stress. Update your resume so it fits current trends and shows off your versatility. Do whatever it takes to improve your relationships.

Gemini Communicate your ideas and collaborate with people who share your concerns. Get personal obligations out of the way before taking on more responsibility.

Cancer Ask for favors. Do whatever is necessary to improve your living conditions. Love is highlighted, and greater security will result if you nurture an important relationship.

Leo Protect your status and reputation. Taking on additional responsibilities will show off your attributes. Don't let a personal relationship interfere with your professional dreams.

Virgo Share your intentions with people who have something to offer. A business trip will help you get what you want. Follow through with your plans regardless of what others do.

Libra Do your own thing. Avoid pressure by making it clear what you will and will not do. Keep your assets and plans a secret until you have worked out a flawless presentation.

Scorpio If you offer help, you will get something unusual in return. A partnership will bring you closer to your goals. Change how or where you live. Negotiations will lead to success.

Sagittarius Keep busy and don't let anyone railroad you into taking on responsibilities that don't belong to you. An unusual idea of yours will put you in a good position.

Capricorn Deal with domestic matters and personal investments. An important relationship will need to be nurtured to avoid discord. Added responsibility will lead to benefits.

Aquarius Tend to your obligations and listen to complaints. Don't give problems you face with a friend or relative time to fester. Offering a fair solution will make you look good.

Pisces Money, legal and health issues will crop up if you are indulgent or take on too much. Negotiations will turn in your favor if you suggest a counteroffer with perks. **EUGENIA LAST**

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Attention adults with

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- You must have **type 2 diabetes**
- You must **not** be currently taking **metformin**

Insurance is not required to participate, and all study-related care and study medications are provided at no charge.

Compensation up to $400 for **time** and **travel** may also be a available.

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Attention adults with **moderate** to serve **Liver Disease**

Would you like an opportunity to help **advance medical research** while being compensated for your time

If so, please contact the **Hassman Research Institute** about participating in a **research study** requiring a **single does** of an **investigational drug.**

Those who qualify must:

- **Be 18 years of age or older** • **Be available for a 48 hour stay in our clinic**
- **Have moderate to serve liver disease, including but not limited to:**
  - Liver failure (idiopathic) ◦ Cirrhosis ◦ Decompensated Hepatitis C ◦ Cancer

- **Insurance is not required to participate, and all study-related care and study medications are provided at no charge.**
- **Transportation and compensation up to $850 for time and travel may be available.**

For more information, call toll-free **1-866-427-2635** or visit **HRITrials.com**

Attention adults with moderate to severe Kidney Disease:

Would you like an opportunity to help **advance medical research** while being compensated for your time?

If so, please contact **Hassman Research Institute** about participating in a **research study** requiring a single dose of an **investigational drug.**

Insurance is **not required** to participate in our study, and all study-related care and study medications are provided at no charge.

Transportation and compensation up to $850 for **time** and **travel** may be available.

Those who qualify must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be available for a 48 hour stay in our clinic
- Have kidney disease
  - eGFR Glomerular Filtration Rate 15-29 mL/min

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Do you or a loved one have schizophrenia?

If so, please contact CCR Trials today about inpatient and outpatient medical research studies

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